

Royal College of Pathologists

Examination regulations - 2010

HISTOCOMPATIBILITY AND IMMUNOGENETICS

These regulations are must be read in conjunction with the *Regulations and Guidelines – College examinations for Membership and Diplomas.*

ENTRY & TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

There is no specific timing for entry to the examination. Candidates should obtain guidance from their training advisor as to when to sit the examination. Planning should take into account planned CCT date (where applicable) but candidates should apply only when they are ready. Some general guidance is given below, but apart from the sequence in which the examinations can be sat is not intended to be prescriptive.

Part 1

Training must be comprehensive in both theoretical and applied aspects of the field. Part 1 will normally be taken after a minimum of 3 years training in an approved laboratory.

For medically qualified candidates, the three years training will include two years of higher specialist training.

For science graduates it is recommended that the training includes at least 2 years of clinical practice in H&I. Most candidates will have gained state registration and will have undergone at least 5-6 years of training in pre- and post-registration grades

Part 2

Part 1 is a pre-requisite for Part 2 and candidates will not normally sit the Part 2 Examination until 12 months after passing the Part 1 Examination.

For medical candidates the Part 2 examination will normally be taken after a minimum of 5 years recognised training including 4 years of higher specialist training.

For science graduates the Part 2 examination will normally be taken after a minimum of 8 years training following obtaining the degree entry qualification. State registration (or equivalent qualification in another country) is a mandatory requirement.

Candidates who have achieved the Part 1 examination in another discipline must sit a test of practical competence.

STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATION

Part 1

The Part 1 Examination comprises of a written examination and a practical and oral examination. The practical component cannot be taken in the same session as the written.

Written Component

The written examination consists of two three hour written papers. Questions may be essays or a series of short notes. Candidates must answer four questions on each paper. No special papers will be set for non-medical candidates.

Practical Components

The practical examination is held over two days at an accredited examination centre and will concentrate on technical and interpretative skills. The importance of cross-matching for solid organ transplantation and HLA typing by molecular biology will be emphasised. Case studies and interpretation of laboratory data, together with statistical manipulation, will usually be provided.

Part 2

Candidates must undertake **one** of the following written options and an oral examination:

- a) a PhD thesis completed during the training period, which must contain novel work relevant to histocompatibility and immunogenetics
- b) a series of refereed papers
- c) a dissertation, which must extensively cover an aspect of histocompatibility and immunogenetics at advanced level. This option should be applicable to those candidates whose PhD thesis subject does not fall within specific areas of histocompatibility and immunogenetics. Candidates choosing this option are strongly advised to seek advice on their chosen subject before proceeding
- d) a casebook, which must be a comprehensive work to an advanced level. The casebook should consist of 7-8 cases with a total length, excluding references, in the range 14,000-20,000 words. Cases should be selected to cover the main areas of clinical practice including solid organ and haematopoietic stem cell transplantation, blood transfusion and immunogenetic testing. A clinical audit should also be included as one case. Candidates choosing this option are strongly advised to seek advice on their chosen subjects before proceeding.
- e) a research thesis completed during study for a professional doctorate. The subject and content of the research project must be approved as relevant to H&I and candidates are strongly advised to seek advice on their project proposal before proceeding if they intend to submit the thesis as a part 2 written option.

The completed written option must be submitted to the College **at least four months before the entry closing date of the Part 2 examination for which the candidate wishes to enter.** The written option must be passed before candidates can proceed to the oral examination.

The Part 2 oral is a one hour examination. 30 minutes is spent discussing three short cases, for which the candidate has 30 minutes to prepare. The remainder of the examination will consist of a number of additional questions that will test scientific knowledge, the ability to apply knowledge in a clinical context and understanding of laboratory organisation and direction.

TIMING OF THE EXAMINATIONS

The Part 1 Written exam will be offered once a year in Spring. The Part 1 Practical and Oral exam and Part 2 Oral exam will be offered once a year in Autumn.

Examinations Department
The Royal College of Pathologists
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